

ViEWS monthly forecasts, November 2019*

Summary of forecasts

Wednesday 13th November, 2019

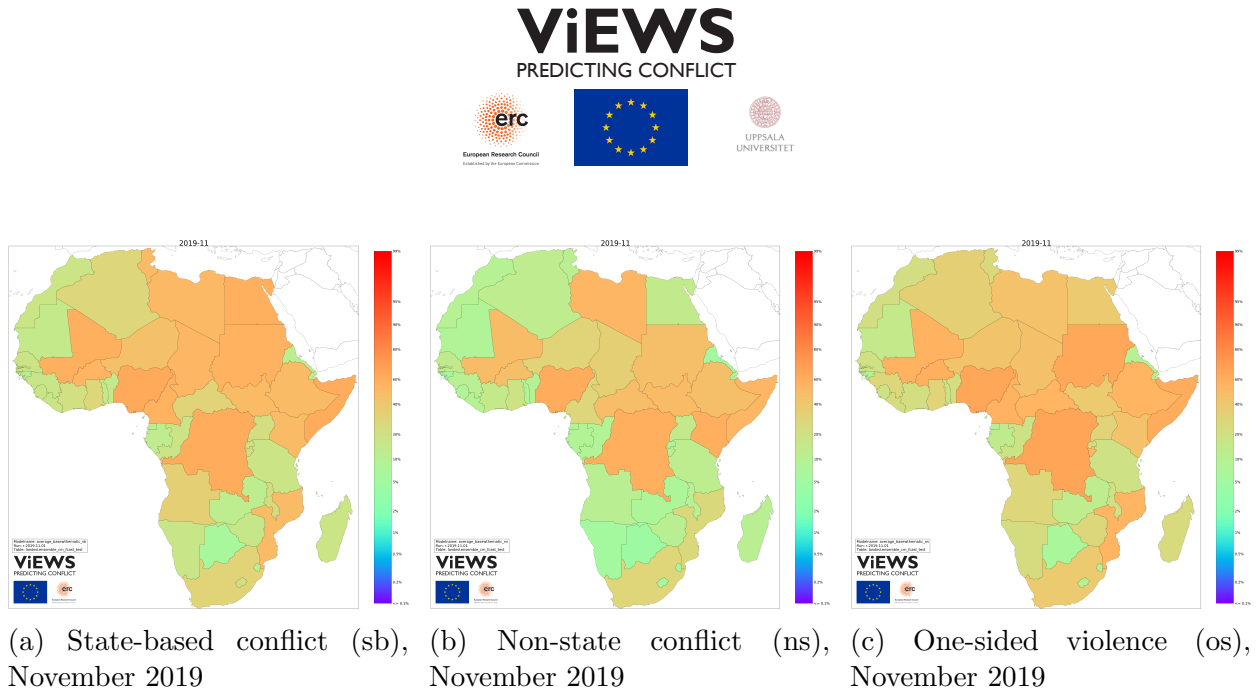


Figure 1: Ensemble forecasts for November 2019

This report presents ViEWS forecasts for November 2019 as of 1 November 2019, which are based on data that are updated up to and including September 2019. The underlying conflict data were produced by the UCDP (<http://ucdp.uu.se>). The ViEWS compilation of these data and data from other sources are available at <https://www.pcr.uu.se/research/views/data/downloads/>.

We highlight developments in the most recent months. For a discussion of what underlies the forecasts in terms of slowly changing risk factors as well as methodological issues, see

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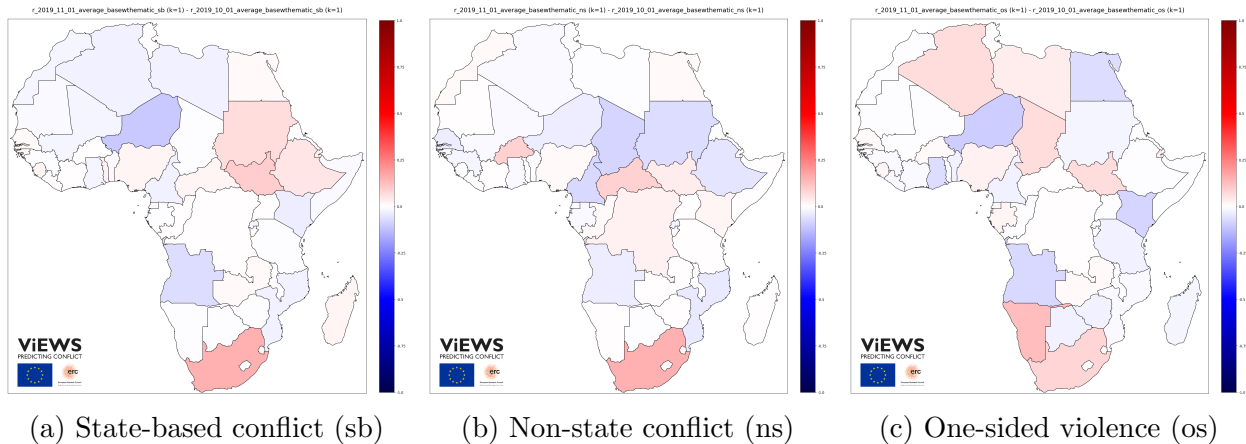


Figure 2: Change maps (cm) for October 2019 to November 2019

the ViEWS introductory article.¹ Figure 1 shows our country-level forecasts for November 2019, Figure 3 the corresponding forecasts at detailed geographic locations (PRIO-GRID level, or **pgm**)², and Figure 5 shows the most recent observed conflict events. Similar reports for previous months are available at <http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/views/>, along with other information on the ViEWS project.

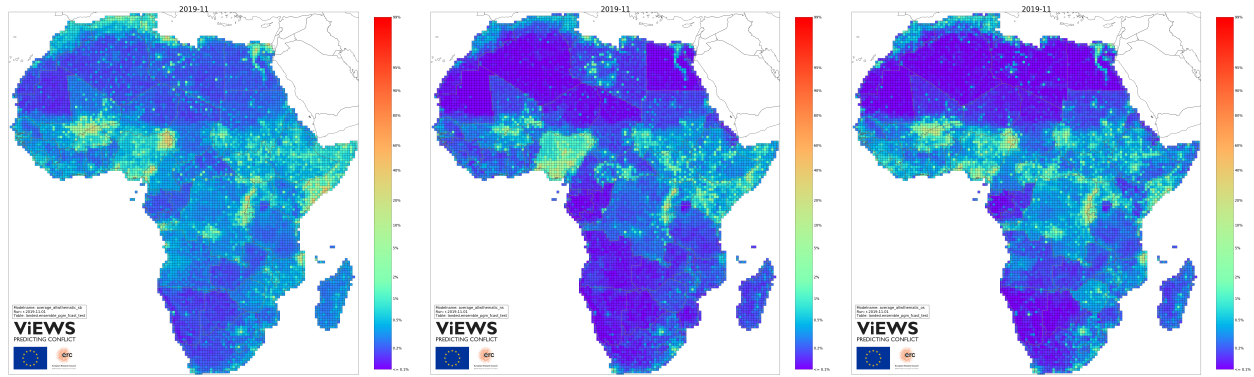
1 Country-month forecasts for November 2019

The plots in Figure 1 show the ViEWS country-level forecasts for the immediate future – what will happen in November 2019 according to our forecasts? We show the probability of at least one event in each country in November 2019, based on data up to and including September 2019. Countries with a red color have been assigned with a forecast probability close to 1, whereas purple countries have been assigned with a probability of less than 0.1. When the forecasts indicate that no event is as likely as at least one event, countries are drawn with a light orange color.

Our forecasts for November 2019 are mostly similar to last month’s forecasts. The November 2019 run is using the same set of models as last month, so only changes to input variables will matter for the forecasts.

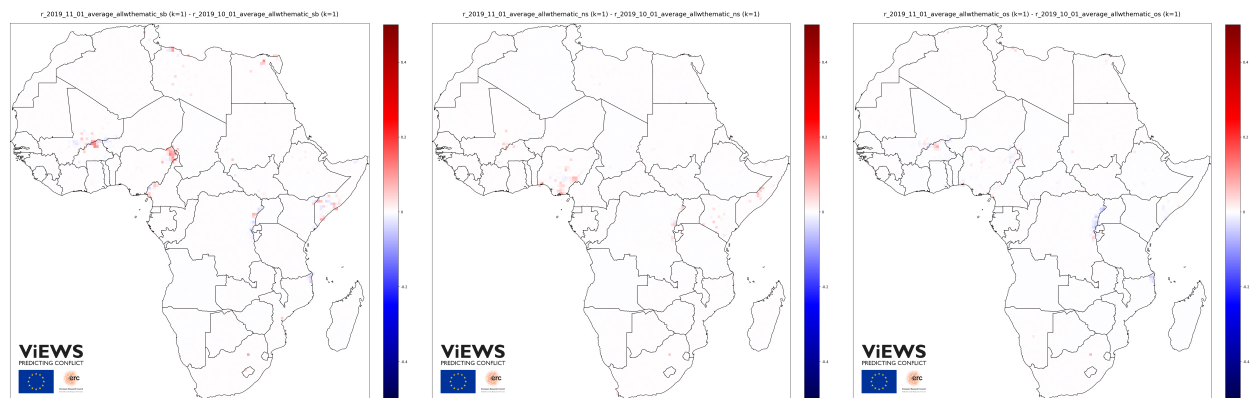
¹<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0022343319823860>.

²PRIO-GRID is a grid structure that divides the terrestrial world into squares of approximately 55 by 55 kilometers. See <http://grid.prio.org/>



(a) State-based conflict (sb), (b) Non-state conflict (ns), (c) One-sided violence (os), November 2019

Figure 3: Ensemble forecasts for November 2019



(a) State-based conflict (sb) (b) Non-state conflict (ns) (c) One-sided violence (os)

Figure 4: Change maps (pgm) for October 2019 to November 2019

1.1 State-based conflict (sb)

We continue to forecast a high probability of state-based conflict in countries that have a recent history of conflict or protest events. Particularly in Egypt, Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Cameroon, Sudan, DR Congo, Somalia and Mozambique, the risk of at least one state-based conflict event is high and over 50%.

Figure 2a shows that compared to last month's forecast, the greatest increase of the risk of a state-based conflict is in South Africa, where in the early weeks of September organized crowds committed xenophobic violence in attacks on migrant-owned businesses in and around Johannesburg.³ The unrest led to around 20 dead, including one killed in clashes with security forces that were trying to disperse a mob on 8 September. A relevant increase of risk furthermore occurred in South Sudan, where 16 government soldiers were

³See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDqcUbQ3YvI>

killed in an ambush perpetrated by the National Salvation Front (NAS) in Yei River State on 6 September. Sudan also shows a slight increase in the risk of state-based violence, given an apparent SLM/A attack on the government in Gereida on 18 September, in which one army lieutenant, two civilians, and five assailants were killed. Conversely, the risk of state-based violence significantly decreased for Niger, where in September no cross-border events near Mali and Burkina Faso occurred.

1.2 Non-state conflict (ns)

The forecast maps for non-state conflict follow partly the same patterns as **sb**, but the patterns of past events do differ across conflict types (see Figure 5). Libya, Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, DR Congo, Kenya, and Somalia remain at particularly high risk of non-state violence this month.

Compared to last month’s forecast, the risk of non-state conflict has increased in South Africa in particular, given the events of xenophobic violence described above. We also find a relevant rise in the risk of non-state violence in Burkina Faso this month, where violence between JNIM and the Dozo community led to two deaths in September. In Central African Republic, clashes in Birao between Patriotic Front for the Renaissance in the Central African Republic (FPRC) and Movement of Central African Liberators for Justice (MLCJ) left at least 44 dead in September. This is despite the rival groups being part of a peace deal signed earlier in February.⁴ The risk of non-state violence appears to have reduced this month for Cameroon, Chad, and Sudan particularly, given that no (clear) non-state conflict events were recorded in the UCDP Candidate Event Data for September 2019.

1.3 One-sided violence (os)

The probability of one-sided violence events remains especially pronounced this month in Mali and Burkina Faso, Nigeria (predominantly given Boko Haram/IS), DR Congo, Sudan, and Somalia (predominantly given Al-Shabaab). Mozambique continues to be at especially high risk of one-sided violence as well, given persistent civilian killings by Islamist militants in the country’s Cabo Delgado Province.

Compared to our October forecast (figure 2c) the model ensemble responds strongly to the case of Namibia in particular, where on 5 September a civilian was killed during a joint Police and Defense anti-crime operation in Windhoek. South Africa again shows an elevated risk of one-sided violence, too, given the xenophobic violence in early September. Algeria

⁴See <https://thedefensepost.com/2019/02/05/central-african-peace-deal-initialled-contents-unpublished/>

shows a slightly elevated probability of one-sided violence, given the killing of two civilians in Relizane by police responding to a protest that was spiked by the police having run over and killed a teenager a day before on 18 September.⁵ Conversely, Kenya and Niger show the strongest reduction, given that no (clear) one-sided violence event has been recorded by the UCDP there.

2 PRIO-GRID-month forecasts for November 2019

Figure 3 presents forecasts at fine-grained sub-national geographical locations for November 2019, for each of the three outcomes. The color mapping is the same as for the country-month forecasts.

2.1 State-based conflict (sb)

The densest risk clusters at **pgm** level for state-based conflict continue to be in northeastern Nigeria, the Anglophone region of Cameroon, the North and South Kivu provinces in DR Congo, Somalia (southern states in particular), Egypt’s Sinai, and the northeastern Cabo Delgado Province of Mozambique where an Islamist insurgency emerged at the end of 2017.⁶ The risk of violence in Mali and Burkina Faso also remains high but is more spread out geographically. Most of these regions have been facing violence for years as shown in Figure 5, reflecting that countries’ recent conflict history is the strongest predictor of future violence.

Compared to last month (see Figure 4a), we find the strongest increases in the risk of state-based violence in the northeast of Nigeria despite ramped up security operations in the region. The risk of state-based violence shows a relatively strong increase in northern Burkina Faso where jihadists have stepped up their attacks in recent months. Relevant is also Libya, where in September scores were killed in continued fighting between the Government of Libya and Forces of the House of Representatives (LNA) in Tripoli. Our predictions for Egypt show a relevant increase of risk around Cairo, where in September Egyptian security forces eliminated nine suspected militants.⁷ This is in addition to mass demonstrations calling for President Sisi’s resignation in Cairo in September.

⁵See <https://www.algiersherald.com/algeria-security-forces-shoot-dead-at-least-2-demonstrators-after-killing-14-years-old/>

⁶See <https://ucdp.uu.se/#/actor/7032>.

⁷See <https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/egypt-says-police-kill-9-suspected-militants-cairo>.

2.2 Non-state conflict (ns) and one-sided violence (os)

The forecasts for non-state conflict and one-sided violence depend on the same factors although with somewhat different implications. The strongest non-state clusters are found in Mali, Southern Nigeria, Eastern DR Congo, and Somalia. For one-sided violence, we find strong and persistent clusters in Mali and Burkina Faso, northeastern Nigeria as well as Lagos and Delta regions, the eastern DR Congo, around Mogadishu in Somalia, and Cabo Delgado province in Mozambique.

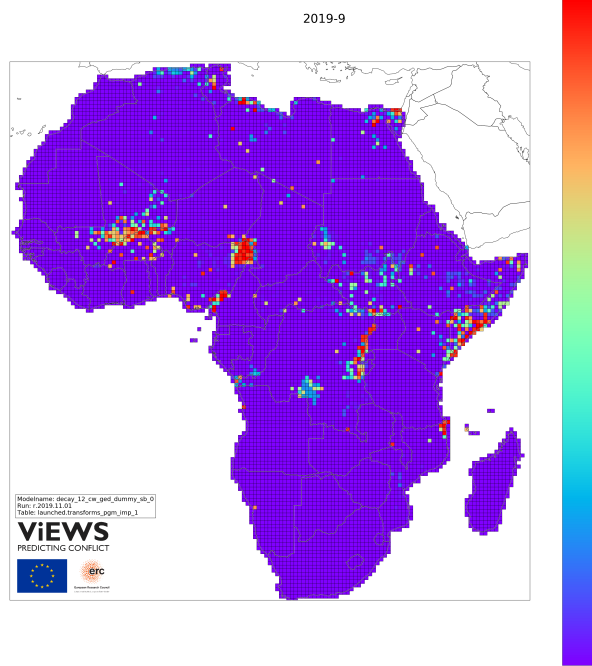
Compared to last month (see Figure 4b), Nigeria shows a relatively uniform increased risk of non-state violence in the country's south in particular. An important contributor to this risk is the violence between cult gangs in the country's South, particularly in the Lagos and Rivers states. Clashes between the Black Axe and Eyie cults in Lagos for instance led to at least nine deaths during the month of September, while between 20 and 27 September alone, clashes between unknown cults in Rivers State led to 16 deaths.⁸ Additionally, ethnic violence between Tiv and Jukun people in Taraba State led to at least 37 deaths in the first week of September. With regard to the risk of one-sided violence (see Figure 4c), we find a relevant increase in Northern Burkina Faso, while the risk has slightly decreased for the North Kivu and Ituri provinces in DR Congo this month.

3 History of UCDP organized violence

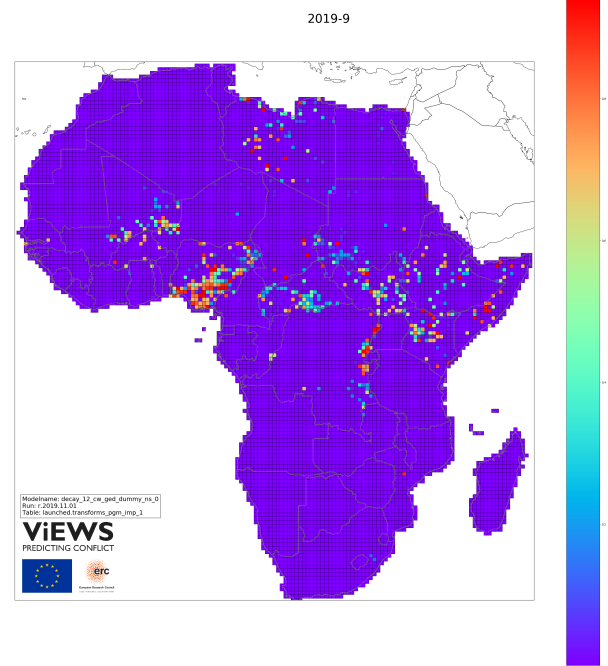
Figure 5 presents the the recent history of violence in each PRIO-GRID cell. Red cells experienced violence in September 2019, and purple ones have not seen armed conflict in many years.

Figures 5a, 5b, 5c show state-based, non-state, and one-sided violence respectively from the UCDP. Figure 5d shows data on protests from ACLED (<https://www.acleddata.com>).

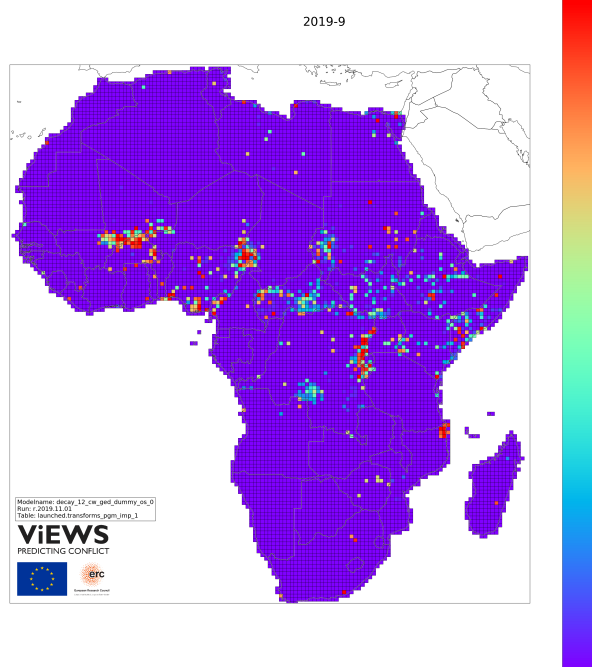
⁸See for instance <https://punchng.com/cult-clashes-claim-four-lives-in-lagos/>.



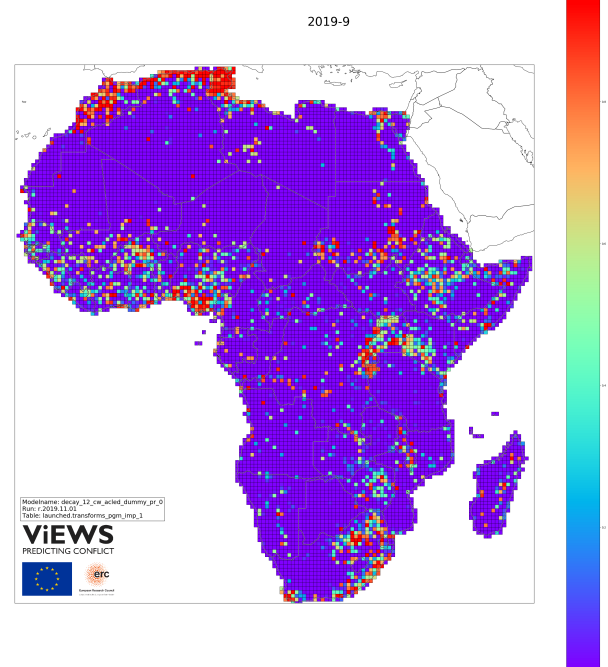
(a) State-based conflict (sb), September 2019



(b) Non-state conflict (ns), September 2019



(c) One-sided violence (os), September 2019



(d) Protests (pr), September 2019

Figure 5: Decay function maps of observed conflict for September 2019